United Nations A/58/399–S/2003/929

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
1 October 2003

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session
Agenda items 37, 38, 84 and 103

Security Council
Fifty-eighth year

The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

Letter dated 1 October 2003 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Israel, the occupying Power, continues to plan and erect the conquest wall that it has been illegally building in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The building of this wall has involved the confiscation and the de facto annexation, indeed conquest, of thousands of more *dunums* of Palestinian land, in grave violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which, as has been repeatedly reaffirmed by the Security Council, is applicable to all of the territory occupied by Israel since 1967. Moreover, this conquest wall seriously threatens to pre-empt the realization of the two-State solution based on Council resolution 242 (1967) and the 1967 line.

The first stage of Israel's conquest wall, measuring approximately 150 kilometres in length, has already been built, beginning in the northern areas of the West Bank. The wall, which consists, inter alia, of a complex system of concrete barriers, trenches, electric fences and barbed wire, cuts deep into the Occupied Palestinian Territory, at some points as deep as six kilometres into Palestinian land. This has involved the destruction of extensive tracts of fertile Palestinian farmland, the separation and isolation of villages, towns and cities and the destruction of the lives and livelihoods of thousands of Palestinians, who are being cut off from their land, work, schools, institutions and even each other. Indeed, the wall has already completely encircled the Palestinian city of Qalqilya, isolating it from surrounding villages and towns, causing widespread destruction to its agricultural land and

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seriously harming the livelihood of the Palestinian community living there. Further, as the course of the wall has snaked southward, parts of it are being built in and around Occupied East Jerusalem in an attempt to further entrench Israel's illegal annexation of the city.

Today, it was announced that the Israeli cabinet officially approved plans for the central section of the conquest wall. Construction of this section is planned to go even deeper in the Palestinian land and it will begin with a segment at least 22 kilometres from the 1967 line, east of the illegal Israeli settlement of "Ariel". In fact, the course of the wall has deliberately been planned to encompass as many illegal Israeli settlements and water resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as possible on the western side of the wall.

Accordingly, it is imperative that the conquest wall be understood and addressed in the context of Israel's illegal settlement activities, colonization of the Palestinian land and expansionist designs. The international community should take urgent action to firmly condemn the construction of this wall and demand its cessation and removal. We call specifically upon the Security Council to immediately take the necessary measures, consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law and the Council's own previous relevant resolutions, to address this grave matter and to bring to a halt these illegal actions by the occupying Power.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 37, 38, 84, and 103, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nasser **Al-Kidwa**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations